

CARDIAC VALVE CLAIMS

1. A system for repairing a cardiac valve, comprising:

a flexible guide shaft extending from a site outside a patient to an area about the cardiac  
5 valve;

a flexible inner shaft supporting at its distal end a remotely controlled tool for performing  
a cardiac repair procedure, the inner shaft received in the guide shaft for disposing said tool at  
the area about the cardiac valve; and

a retainer at the area of the cardiac valve, the retainer being attached to an annulus of the  
10 cardiac valve, and being closeable via the tool to draw the annulus into a smaller diameter.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the retainer comprises a ring of predetermined diameter  
attacheable to the annulus.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the retainer comprises a ring and any one or a combination of  
15 wire clips and sutures.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the ring comprises nitinol.

20 5. The system of claim 1, wherein the retainer comprises a fiber disposed peripherally about a  
ring, the fiber constructed and arranged for penetration through tissue.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the fiber comprises a securing piece disposed about at least  
one end of the fiber.

25 7. The system of claim 5, wherein the securing piece comprises an associated retaining button  
capable of sliding along the fiber.

8. The system of claim 5, wherein the tool is adapted to engage the securing piece.

9. The system of claim 5, wherein the tool comprises a set of jaws.

10. The system of claim 5, the retainer further including means to tighten the fiber.

5 11. The system of claim 1, wherein the flexible inner shaft comprises a controlled flexible segment, for controllably bending the inner shaft at the flexible segment, thereby controlling a position of the tool.

12. A system for remotely repairing a cardiac valve, comprising:

10 a guide catheter extending through an area of the human body, a distal end of the guide catheter being disposed at an area about the cardiac valve;

a fiber extending about a diameter of an annulus of the cardiac valve, the fiber being engaged with the diameter of the annulus and capable of drawing the annulus into a smaller diameter;

15 a flexible working catheter received by the guide catheter, the working catheter including a tool engageable with the fiber; and

a remote manipulator controlled from a site remote from the body, for controlling the tool.

20 13. The system of claim 12, wherein the tool comprises a pair of jaws for grasping the fiber.

14. The system of claim 12, further comprising a monitor for determining a reduction or elimination in valve regurgitation.

25 15. The system of claim 14, wherein the monitor comprises an ultrasound monitor.

16. The system of claim 12, wherein the flexible working catheter comprises a controlled flexible segment, for controllably bending the inner shaft at the flexible segment, thereby controlling a position of the tool.

17. A method of repairing a mitral valve of the heart, comprising:

extending a guide shaft from a site outside the patient to a site adjacent the mitral valve;

inserting a fiber through the guide shaft;

securing the fiber about an annulus of the mitral valve while the heart is beating, the

5   securing step including introducing through the guide shaft a flexible inner shaft having a  
remotely controlled distal tool for securing the fiber about the annulus leaving opposite ends of  
the fiber exposed; and

applying a force to the fiber ends so as to draw the annulus into a tighter diameter.

10   18. The method of claim 17, wherein the securing step further comprises securing an end piece  
of the fiber at a trigone area of the mitral valve.

15   19. The method of claim 18, including providing a second securing piece to another end of the  
fiber so as to draw the fiber tautly so as to draw the annulus into a tighter diameter so as to  
reduce or eliminate valve regurgitation.

20   20. The method of claim 17, wherein flexible inner shaft is capable of controlled bending via a  
remote manipulator.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of extending the guide shaft comprises passing the  
guide shaft through an inferior vena cava to the right atrium.

22. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of extending the guide shaft comprises passing the  
guide shaft from above the jugular vein or from below the femoral vein.

25   23. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of extending the guide shaft comprises puncturing  
an incision in a wall of the right atrium, and passing the guide shaft through the incision into the  
left atrium.

24. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of extending the guide shaft comprises securing the guide shaft to a septal wall between the left atrium and the right atrium.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the guide shaft is maintained at a desired position at the septal wall via a balloon.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising inflating the balloon in the left atrium to maintain a desired position of a distal end of the guide shaft.

27. A method of repairing a mitral valve of the heart, comprising:

extending a guide shaft from a site outside the patient to a site about the mitral valve;  
providing a ring of a first diameter, the ring being deformable and capable of matching a desired predetermined diameter of an annulus of the mitral valve, the ring engaged with the guide shaft via a flexible inner shaft received by the guide shaft;

securing the ring about the mitral valve annulus while the heart is beating, the securing step including engaging the ring about a circumference of the annulus via a remotely controlled tool supported at a distal end of the inner shaft, and drawing the annulus into the predetermined diameter.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the securing includes attaching one side of the ring to the annulus by at least one wire clip.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the ring is secured by the wire clip at the trigone area of the mitral valve.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the ring is secured by sutures.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the sutures are drawn by the flexible inner shaft to draw the annulus into the predetermined diameter.

32. The method of claim 27, wherein the flexible inner shaft is remotely controlled for a bending at a predetermined segment.

33. The method of claim 27, wherein the step of extending the guide shaft comprises puncturing  
5 an incision in a wall of the right atrium, and passing the guide shaft through the incision into the left atrium.

34. The method of claim 27, wherein the step of extending the guide shaft comprises securing the guide shaft through a septal wall between the left atrium and the right atrium.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein the guide shaft is maintained at a desired position at the septal wall via a balloon.

36. The method of claim 35, further comprising inflating the balloon in the left atrium to secure a distal end of the guide shaft.

37. A method of repairing a cardiac valve, comprising:

providing a balloon supported on a catheter member;

supporting a plurality of peripherally disposed anchor pins from an outer surface of the

20 balloon, the anchor pins being tethered together;

passing the balloon in a deflated state to an area about the cardiac valve;

inflating the balloon to thrust the anchor pins into an annulus of the cardiac valve; and

tightening the tether to pull the peripherally disposed pins into a smaller diameter.

25 38. The method of claim 37, wherein the balloon in its deflated state passes through the left ventricle of the heart into the area about the cardiac valve.

39. The method of claim 37, wherein the cardiac valve is the mitral valve.

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40. The method of claim 37, wherein the providing comprises providing a balloon of predetermined length having the anchor pins disposed at approximately a center section thereof.

41. A method for repairing a cardiac valve, comprising:

5       providing a balloon;  
      supporting and passing the balloon in a deflated state to an area about the cardiac valve;  
      disposing a plurality of peripherally disposed anchor pins arranged about an outer surface  
of the balloon, and a tether for intercoupling said anchor pins;  
      inflating the balloon once positioned at the area about the cardiac valve to thrust the  
10       anchor pins into a ring defining a base of the cardiac valve; and  
      tightening the tether to pull the peripherally disposed pins into a smaller diameter.

42. A system for remotely repairing a cardiac valve, comprising:

15       a flexible guide shaft extending through an area of the human body so as to locate a distal  
end thereof at an area about the cardiac valve;

20       a delivery member for supporting an array of securing pieces at a distal end thereof and  
extending through said flexible guide member, the array of securing pieces being intercoupled by  
a cable;

      a remote manipulator controlled from a site remote from the body, for controlling the  
20       delivery member to expel the securing pieces in sequence about the cardiac valve annulus as the  
valve is functioning, the remote manipulator capable of controlling a tightening of the cable to  
draw the annulus into a smaller diameter.

43. The system of claim 42, wherein the remote manipulator comprises a manually controlled  
25       input device, and a computer processing unit for interpreting manipulations of the input device.

44. The system of claim 42, wherein the securing pieces comprise metal anchor pieces, each  
having a closed loop for receiving the cable.

45. The system of claim 44, wherein the delivery member includes an inner flexible shaft, and the anchor pieces have end legs constructed of a material deformable to fit within the inner flexible shaft.

5 46. The system of claim 45, wherein the end legs, once deployed, are capable of engaging the cardiac valve annulus.

47. The system of claim 44, wherein the anchor pieces are constructed of an elastic material.

10 48. The system of claim 47, wherein the elastic material comprises Nitinol.

49. The system of claim 42, further including a crimp element secured to the cable, that once tightened, is capable of maintaining the annulus in a closed position.

15 50. The system of claim 49, further including a crimping tool received by the guide shaft for securing the crimping element, and a cutting tool, later received by the guide shaft for cutting the cable.

20 51. The system of claim 42, wherein the array of securing pieces comprises a plurality of staples, and the delivery member comprises a storage housing for the staples.

52. The system of claim 51, wherein each staple has pointed ends and a center loop for receiving the cable.

25 53. The system of claim 51, including a clamping mechanism at a distal end of the storage housing for selectively closing each staple as they progress out of the storage housing.

54. The system of claim 51, wherein first and last staples are secured at a trigone area of the annulus, and the cable extends outside of the patient for external control of the cable.

55. The system of claim 51, wherein the release of each staple is controllable by a remotely operated user interface of the remote manipulator.

56. The system of claim 42, wherein the array of securing pieces comprise staples, each staple  
5 being constructed of a deformable material having a closed rest position, and the delivery system includes a holder for retaining the staples in a biased open position in readiness for release.

57. The system of claim 56, wherein the holder comprises a rod, and the staples are constructed of Nitinol.

58. The system of claim 42, wherein the delivery member includes an inner flexible shaft member received in the flexible guide shaft, the remote manipulator capable of controlling multiple degrees-of-freedom of both the flexible guide member and the inner flexible shaft member in the area about the cardiac valve.

59. A flexible instrument system for repairing an anatomic body part, comprising:

a shaft having sufficient flexibility along a length thereof so as to readily flex and conform to a pathway in the anatomy as the shaft is inserted therein;

a drivable mechanism disposed at a proximal end of the shaft for controlling a tool  
20 supported at a distal end of the shaft, the shaft being insertable into a subject so as to dispose the distal end of the shaft at an internal site of an anatomic body part;

and a retainer attached to an annulus at the anatomic body part, the retainer being closeable so as to draw the annulus into a smaller diameter.

25 60. The system of claim 59, wherein the shaft and drivable mechanism are disposable as a unit.

61. The system of claim 59, further comprising a remote drive unit for controlling the drivable mechanism.



62. The system of claim 61, wherein the shaft is detachable from the drive unit and is portable.

63. The system of claim 59, wherein the shaft is remotely controlled from a user interface in performing the repair.

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64. The system of claim 59, wherein the retainer comprises a fiber, wire, or a cable sewn to the annulus via the tool.

65. The system of claim 59, wherein the retainer comprises a ring having a predetermined diameter matching that of the desired diameter of the annulus, the ring being deformable for receiving by the shaft.

66. The system of claim 59, wherein the retainer comprises an array of anchor pieces.

67. The system of claim 59, wherein the retainer comprises a plurality of staples.

68. The system of claim 67, wherein the staples are constructed of a deformable material.

69. The system of claim 68, wherein the staples are constructed of nitinol.

70. The system of claim 59, wherein the retainer is closeable by a crimp element.

71. The system of claim 59, including a flexible guide shaft for receiving the flexible shaft, both shafts being remotely controllable with multiple degrees-of-freedom.

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